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THE PURITANIC PHILOSOPHY AND JONATHAN EDWARDS.¹

BY F. B. SANBORN.

In speaking of philosophy in America, I should hardly be called on to present any "History of Philosophy" at all, since there is nothing that can be distinctively recognized from the intellectual side as American philosophy—using the term as we do when we speak of the Indian, the Greek, the German, or the English philosophy. Our countrymen have been the followers of many systems, the inventors of none; for not even the transcendentalism of New England can be considered as a distinct American philosophy, though it comes nearer to that designation than any other.

Nevertheless, I find it convenient, and even, in a high sense, very appropriate, to speak of philosophy in America as passing through certain unique and varied historical phases; only I use the broad and noble term Philosophy as indicating the guide of life, the exponent and directress of national existence, rather than a certain metaphysical insight, fruitful of speculation even when barren of results; such as was censured of old in the Athenians, later in the Schoolmen, and, less than a hundred years ago, in the Germans. There was a time when Wordsworth could say, and with a melancholy portion of truth—

Alas! what boots the long laborious quest
Of moral prudence sought through good and ill?

What is it but a vain and curious skill,
If sapient Germany must lie deprest
Beneath the brutal sword? Her haughty Schools
Shall blush; and may not we with sorrow say,
A few strong instincts and a few plain rules
Among the herdsmen of the Alps have wrought
More for mankind at this unhappy day
Than all the pride of intellect and thought?

¹ A lecture read at the Concord School of Philosophy, July 24, 1883.

Germany has done something to justify her sapient and haughty schools since the time of Wordsworth and Napoleon; and so America, without such schools, but with a manifest philosophic destiny, has gone forward, ever since the landing of our Pilgrim Fathers in 1620, to make significant, by practical illustration, certain phases of speculative thought and ethical purpose.

These phases, roughly stated, are: (1) The Puritanic Philosophy in history from 1620 to 1760, culminating in Edwards; (2) The Philanthropic Philosophy in history, from 1760 to 1820, with Franklin as its type; (3) The Negation of Philosophy, from 1820 to 1850; (4) The Ideal or Vital Philosophy, from 1850 onward, with Emerson as its best representative.

These periods, of course, interlock and pass into each other, so that it is hard to say when one ends and the next begins; but, to illustrate them, three persons are taken of eminent fame in America and throughout the world: Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), as the type of Puritanic thought; Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), as the type of Philanthropic Realism; and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), as the type of Idealism. For the intermediate period—between Franklin's and Jefferson's establishment of real prosperity and theoretic freedom and Emerson's epoch of ideal excellence—I could find no sufficient personal representative; but any successful politician or popular favorite would serve—one as well as the other. This period, like the age immediately following adolescence in men, was a vigorous, ungoverned, risky time, from which we emerged into the tumult of civil war, and thence, with sinews hardened and egotism abated, into the calmer atmosphere of assured national life.

When Canning said of those nascent futilities in the world's history—the South American republics—"I called into existence a New World to redress the balance of the Old," he used a grandiose phrase to describe what had been done two centuries before by a little band of heretics seceding from England and landing on Plymouth Rock. It was Bradford and Winthrop, John Smith and John Robinson, and not George IV's eloquent premier, who redressed the balance of Europe with the rising orb of America. And these men, the true planters of our nation, were humble Christians and resolute Calvinists, who in their philosophy put God first and made their religion a thing of daily life. The Puri-

tan movement in England meant much, but it signified far more in America, where it shaped the permanent foundations of national greatness. Its reign there was short—scarcely more than twenty years—while here it held sway for more than a century, and strongly influenced colonies like New York, Virginia, and New Hampshire, where it did not ostensibly prevail, as it did in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Puritanism—which was Calvinism with English modifications—did in fact what Tacitus said was very difficult—it reconciled empire and liberty—the sovereignty of God and the freedom—even the political freedom—of man. It exalted the omnipotence of the Deity till men looked in its eyes, as Cromwell called them, “like poor creeping worms upon the earth,” and then it raised these depraved and lost creatures to be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, and the equals of whatever boastful or splendid walked the world. Thus Calvinism gave birth to democracy, while Arminianism, the professed creed of liberty, favored inequality and every kind of privilege. “What do the Arminians hold?” asked an inquirer in Archbishop Laud’s time. “The best bishoprics and deaneries in England,” answered Dr. Morley, who soon became a bishop himself. Time passed by, and in a few years those bishoprics and deaneries had all fallen before the sword of Cromwell, that soldier of Calvinism—the leader of that army of the Lord which was mighty in England for the pulling down of strongholds. “Calvinism,” says Froude, “was the spirit that rises in revolt against untruth—the spirit which has appeared and reappeared, and in due time will appear again, unless God be a delusion and man be as the beasts that perish; for it is but the inflashing upon the conscience of the nature and origin of the laws by which mankind are governed.” The Puritanic philosophy, then, like the stoical, was both ethic and religious; it declared the chief end of man to be the love and service of God, and that this service must be in purity of heart and practical morality. I say nothing here of the traditional theology which the Puritans held to, and which had lost some of its noblest limbs in the wrench that tore it from the trunk of the parent church; but in the grand simplicity of its philosophic principle—the immediate dependence of the universe on a conscious, wise, loving, and just First Cause—Puritanism yields to none of the more attractive systems of philosophy. It was in expanding these elements of Cal-

vinism—the foreordination, justice, and omnipotence of a personal God—into the detail of an ecclesiastical system, that Puritanism broke down and lost its hold on the world. And that most acute and inflexible of all the Puritans, Jonathan Edwards, coming upon the world's stage just as the Puritanic was yielding to the philanthropic spirit, was, of course, thrown into the most pronounced contrast with the tendency of his times, and thus became the clearest manifestation, at least for America, of the Puritanic philosophy—in which God was everything, man nothing. In the philanthropic philosophy, on the other hand, man's welfare became everything, and God's glory little or nothing. Edwards was devout and ascetic—Franklin humane and genial, not to say godless.

Treating of the religious affections and of their influence on the soul, Edwards said, at the age of fourteen, when speaking of the comparative excellence of the higher qualities :

One of the highest excellencies is love. As nothing else has a proper being but spirits, and as bodies are but the shadow of being, therefore the consent of bodies one to another, and the harmony that is among them is but the shadow of excellency. The highest excellency, therefore, must be the consent of spirits one to another. And the sweet harmony between the various parts of the universe is only an image of mutual love.

A few years later he wrote :

I walked abroad alone in a solitary place in my father's pasture, for contemplation. And as I was walking there and looking upon the sky and clouds there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God as I know not how to express. . . . After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast or appearance of divine glory on almost everything. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love seemed to appear in everything: in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature, which used greatly to fix my mind. I used often to sit and view the moon for a long time, and in the days spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the mean time singing forth with a low voice my contemplation of the Creator and Redeemer. . . . I found, from time to time, an inward sweetness that would carry me away in my contemplations.

This I know not how to express otherwise than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations, of being alone in the mountains or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and wrapt and swallowed up in God.

From this religious intoxication the step was but a short one to that view of God which has been made the chief reproach against Edwards and his school of Calvinists—men at variance on some points with the accepted creed of Calvinism, and more in harmony with the earlier Calvinism of St. Augustine, if so Hibernian a distinction may be allowed. In describing his religious experiences of youth, as he looked back on them from mature life, Edwards once said :

From my childhood up my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased, leaving *them* eternally to perish, and so be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied as to this sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of man according to his sovereign pleasure; but never could I give an account how or by what means I was thus convinced. And there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind with respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against it in the most absolute sense—in God showing mercy to whom he will, and hardening whom he will. God's absolute sovereignty and justice, with respect to salvation and damnation, is what my mind seems to rest assured of. This doctrine has very often appeared exceedingly pleasant, bright, and sweet; absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God.

If Edwards had been willing to exercise his acute and refining intellect in reasoning upon this question, as the greatest of the Latin fathers, St. Augustine, did, perhaps he would, by inward argument, have reached that conclusion which Augustine so often and so painfully reasons out, as in the seventh book of his "Confessions":

Whatever is good; that evil, whose origin I questioned, has no substantial existence—since if it were substance it would be good. For either it would be substance incorruptible, and hence a great good, or else

a substance corruptible, which could not be corrupted unless it were good originally. Therefore I saw, and it was revealed unto me, O God! that Thou hast made all things good; and that there are really no substantial existences which Thou hast not made; and to Thee evil exists not at all; nor does it exist in thy creation as a whole, since there is nothing outside of that creation to invade and corrupt the order which Thou hast established. In some parts of that creation there are, to be sure, some things which appear evil, because they are out of place; but these same apparent evils are in place elsewhere, and there they are good; and in themselves they are good.

This remarkable passage, the thought of which is found in many philosophers, may have been in Emerson's mind when he wrote his hazardous poem of "Uriel"—these verses especially:

One, with low tones that decide,
Doubt and reverend use defied;
With a look that solved the sphere
And stirred the devils everywhere,
He gave his sentiment divine
Against the being of a line.
Line in nature is not found,
Unit and universe are round;
In vain produced, all rays return,
Evil will bless and ice will burn.

I would not say that this abstruse and perilous thought of the universe was in the mind of Edwards—the range of whose vision was so far within that of Augustine and Emerson—thus giving the most favorable interpretation that can be put on the shocking and damnatory parts of his theology. In defending the doctrine of original sin, Edwards, in fact, maintained that God is not directly the author of sin and evil, but only disposes things in his universe in such a manner that sin will certainly ensue. Indirectly, therefore, through his foreknowledge, God is the author of evil, to which both Edwards and Augustine at times seem to ascribe an eternity of continuance, not quite in harmony with the reasoning of both as to the goodness of God and the origin of evil. In truth, the early dualism of Augustine never seems to have been in all respects shaken off, though he contended so stoutly again and again to refute that Manichean heresy. By refusing to give a place, as Origen did, to a general "restoration" of fallen

angels and lost human souls, Augustine seems to have allowed in practice the heresy he condemned in words—that evil is eternal, and therefore practically self-existent and a check on God's goodness—not merely the antiphonic refrain to the loveliest of songs—as he declares it to be in his “City of God” (Lib. xi, cap. xviii).

Dr. Kirkland had been a student of theology with Dr. West in Edwards's former home at Stockbridge. Dr. West was the author in 1772 of an able defence of the great work of Edwards on the “Freedom of the Will,” which had appeared in 1754. Edwards died in 1758, and this anecdote by Dr. Kirkland relates to a period more than thirty years later. “My father,” says Kirkland, “sent me to Dr. West's house to study theology. He placed in my hand such books as Edwards's powerful work on ‘Original Sin,’ and Hopkins's treatise on ‘Holiness,’ books which, if I could have read them with any belief, would have sent rottenness into my bones. They were written with such prodigious power that they made me melancholy. I used to go out into the doctor's orchard upon that beautiful side-hill, and there I would pick up a ripe and blushing apple and look at it; then I would pluck a flower, and observe its beauty and inhale its odor, and say to myself, ‘These are beautiful types of the loveliness of God; I know God is benevolent, and I will return to my studies cheered by these impressions.’”

But Dr. Kirkland added: “These tremendous doctrines seemed to awaken the deepest emotions of piety in the mind of Dr. West, and to impart light and gladness and thankfulness to his inmost spirit.” For Puritanism had the secret of extracting the sweetest honey from the sourest and strongest substances. “Scarce anything,” says Edwards, speaking of his early religious life, “scarce anything was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning; formerly nothing had been so terrible to me.”

It was indeed the noble error of Edwards, as of Augustine—his master in the spirit, if not in fact—to approach philosophy too exclusively from the side of the received Christian theology. The famous book on the “Freedom of the Will” was not so much a philosophic treatise as a theological polemic aimed at the Arminians. Edwards wrote to the Scotch minister, Erskine, in 1749, that he “had been endeavoring to bring the late great objections and outcries against Calvinistic divinity to the test of the strictest

reasoning; and particularly that grand objection that the Calvinistic notions of God's moral government are contrary to the common sense of mankind." A philosophical work entered upon in a spirit so controversial would need to be carried forward magnanimously, and to draw from the deepest fountains of speculative truth in order to merit the praise that has been given to Edwards on the Will. In truth, these fountains were hardly accessible to Edwards, who knew Plato but partially, and Aristotle hardly at all; who could not read French; who was ignorant of the great labors of the Schoolmen and the Catholic theologians since Augustine, and would have, perhaps, despised them had he better known them, as Cotton Mather and the Calvinists in general did. "It is indeed amazing," wrote Mather, while Edwards was in college, "to see the fate of the writings that go under the name of Aristotle. First falling into the hands of those who could not read them, and yet, for the sake of the famous author, were willing to keep them, they were for a long time hid under ground, where many of them deserved a lodging; and from this place of darkness the torn or worn manuscripts were anon fetched out, and imperfectly and unfaithfully enough transcribed, and conveyed from Athens to Rome. The Saracens by and by got them, and they spoke Arabic—the concise and broken style a little suiting them; and even in Africa there were many Aristotelian schools erected. When learning revived under Charlemagne, all Europe turned Aristotelian; yea, in some universities they swore allegiance to him; and, oh, monstrous! if I am not misinformed, they do in some universities at this day. No mortal else ever had such a prerogative to govern mankind as this philosopher, who, after the prodigious cart-loads of stuff that has been written to explain him, yet remains in many other things besides his 'Entelechia' sufficiently unintelligible, and forever, in almost all things, unprofitable. Avicen, after he had read his 'Metaphysics' forty times over, and had them all by heart, was forced, after all, to lay them aside in despair of ever understanding them."

This Philistinism of Mather toward Aristotle (which reminds one of the mutterings of Mr. Adams the other day against the whole study of Greek) was not peculiar to the wilful, witch-hunting divine of Boston, but was a common Puritan trait, from which Edwards could not escape. The author of an elaborate system of

theology for Calvinistic schools—Bernard Pictet, of Geneva—writing in 1696, seven years before Edwards was born, thus speaks in his preface, after ridiculing the middle-age Schoolmen :

Cause enough, then, why our well-instructed Reformers of the Church should banish from the reformed churches the whole scholastic theology, with its curious, futile, and even blasphemous questions, and give themselves wholly to exegesis of the Word of God; drawing that theology which they taught, not from Lombard's "Sentences," not from Aristotle nor Plato, but from the well of Scripture undefiled. I too have abstained as much as possible from the barbarous jargon of the Schoolmen.

The work of Edwards was not "drawn from the well of Scripture undefiled," nor yet, as are the works of Augustine, continually fortified by Scripture texts; but almost wholly made up of the links in a chain of close metaphysical argument, which we must admire even when we disown its conclusions. These were in some respects but another form of that destructive negative criticism first initiated by Locke and Hobbes in England, which, in the hands of Hume, had been so effective in unsettling the basis of philosophy in the eighteenth century, and which, a few years later, when Hume's writings became widely known, was to prepare the way, in Kant's mind, for the new speculative philosophy of the nineteenth century. To this philosophy Edwards would have been logically opposed; but there was in him a vein of mystical and transcendental thought, at variance with his own logic, which might have led him, had he lived to the age of Mr. Alcott, to welcome the work of Kant as opening the way to something better than the logical faculty or the gatherings of experience could prescribe as an ultimate philosophy.

The Puritans denounced Aristotle and the Schoolmen—but what does our Puritan Schoolman, our Father Jonathan of Connecticut, proceed to do at once, in the absence of Plato and Aristotle and the subtle doctors of middle-age Europe? What but set up a school of his own, with a subtle metaphysical treatise or two, which his followers have been expounding for more than a hundred years? Edwards's "Careful and Strict Inquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notion of that Freedom of the Will which is supposed to be essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame," was published in

1754. In this book Edwards did not for an instant disown the metaphysical method, but boldly praised it and called it indispensable, as the Catholic Schoolmen had. I do not purpose to enter upon the strict chain of metaphysical arguments by which Edwards maintains his chief proposition—that the human will is not free; nor shall I attempt either to uphold or refute that proposition. It is doubtful if more cogent reasoning was ever marshalled to prove a point against which the nature of man instinctively rebels—namely, that we are constrained by necessity to do what we feel that we are free to avoid doing. But take notice that he displays an activity and subtlety of mind such as no American philosopher had before shown, and that Edwards was very much in the line of the intellectual effort of his day—that is, the first half of the eighteenth century. It was upon such reasoning, as well as upon their numberless virtues, that the renown of the English Berkeley and the French Malebranche was founded; and it was by arguments still more subtle that the Scotchman Hume, contemporary with Edwards, threw half the civilized world into a maze of scepticism until Kant came to their rescue, a few years after the death of Edwards. The surprising fact is, that, with these remarkable powers of analysis and reasoning, which would have made Edwards a match for Hume on his own ground, and with this demand of his age to be fed on that sort of food, the Puritan minister yet stood resolutely by his chosen task of preaching Christianity as he understood it to the poor Indians of Stockbridge, and the anxious saints and sinners of New England, wherever he encountered them. His mission was to save souls, by helping men to repent of their sins and be converted; and to this he devoted himself rather than to the calm and leisurely study of philosophy, such as in after-years occupied the thoughts of Kant at Königsberg. It was his zeal, as a preacher, in fact, that led Edwards to compose his great work on the Will—as appears by his letters to his Scotch correspondent, Erskine, to whom, in 1757, he thus explained the connection between the Puritan means of salvation and the doctrine of necessity as applied to the will of man:

The doctrine of a self-determining will, as the ground of all moral good and evil, tends to prevent any proper exercise of faith in God and Christ in the affair of our salvation, as it tends to prevent all dependence upon them. For, instead of this, it teaches a kind of absolute independence

on all those things that are of chief importance in this affair, our righteousness depending originally on our own acts, as self-determined. And truly in this scheme man is not dependent on God, but God is rather dependent on man in this affair. Yea, these notions tend effectually to prevent men's ever seeking after conversion with any earnestness, and indeed they destroy the very nature of conversion itself.

Of Edwards in the pulpit we have this account from one who heard him :

He carried his notes with him into his desk, and read most that he wrote. Still, he was not confined to them, and, if some thoughts were suggested to him while he was preaching which did not occur to him when writing, and appeared pertinent, he would deliver them with as great propriety and fluency, and often with greater pathos, and attended with a more sensibly good effect on his hearers than what he had written. While preaching, he customarily stood holding his small manuscript volume in his left hand, his elbow resting on the cushion or the Bible, his right arm rarely raised but to turn the leaves, and his person almost motionless. His success was not owing to the pictures of fancy or to any ostentation of learning or of talents. In his preaching, usually, all was plain, familiar, sententious, and practical.

It was to preaching in the hope of promoting the conversion of men that Edwards devoted himself; but his youthful observations in natural history show that he might have been another Linnæus, or a naturalist of distinction in some other field, if he had cultivated his talents for observation and scientific discovery. These, like all the intellectual powers of Edwards, were very marked in his childhood—and it is rather a pity that he did not take the same line of development which Swedenborg did—the eager pursuit of science first, and the promotion of spiritual knowledge afterward. In his childhood, perhaps at the age of twelve years, Edwards addressed this letter to some person of distinction in this country or in England—to whom is not known—but about the year 1716, before Linnæus was sent from his father's parsonage to a Swedish academy :

May it please Your Honor :

There are some things that I have happily seen of the wondrous way of the working of the spider. Although everything belonging to this insect is admirable, there are some phenomena relating to them more particularly wonderful. Everybody that is used to the country knows their

marching in the air from one tree to another, sometimes at the distance of five or six rods. Nor can one go out in a dewy morning, at the latter end of August and the beginning of September, but he shall see multitudes of webs, made visible by the dew that hangs on them, reaching from one tree, branch, and shrub, to another, which webs are commonly thought to be made in the night because they appear only in the morning; whereas none of them are made in the night, for these spiders never come out in the night when it is dark, as the dew is then falling. But these webs may be seen well enough in the daytime, by an observing eye, by their reflection in the sunbeams. Especially late in the afternoon may these webs, that are between the eye and that part of the horizon that is under the sun, be seen very plainly, being advantageously posited to reflect the rays. And the spiders themselves may be very often seen travelling in the air, from one stage to another among the trees, in a very unaccountable manner. But I have often seen that which is much more astonishing. In very calm and serene days in the forementioned time of the year, standing at some distance behind the end of a house or some other opake body, so as just to hide the disk of the sun and keep off his dazzling rays, and looking along close by the side of it, I have seen a vast multitude of little shining webs and glistening strings brightly reflecting the sunbeams, and some of them of great length, and of such a height, that one would think they were tacked to the vault of the heavens, and would be burned like tow in the sun, and make a very beautiful, pleasing, as well as surprising appearance. It is wonderful at what a distance these webs may plainly be seen. Some that are at a great distance appear (it cannot be less than) several thousand times as big as they ought. I believe they appear under as great an angle as a body of a foot diameter ought to do at such a distance, so greatly doth brightness increase the apparent bigness of bodies at a distance, as is observed of the fixed stars.

But that which is most astonishing is, that very often appear at the end of these webs spiders sailing in the air with them, which I have often beheld with wonderment and pleasure, and showed to others. And since I have seen these things I have been very conversant with spiders, resolving, if possible, to find out the mysteries of these their astonishing works. And I have been so happy as very frequently to see their manner of working: that when a spider would go from one tree to another, or would fly in the air, he first lets himself down a little way from the twig he stands on by a web; and then, laying hold of it by his fore-feet, and bearing himself by that, puts out a web, which is drawn out of his tail with infinite ease in the gently moving air, to what length the spider pleases; and, if

the farther end happens to catch by a shrub or the branch of a tree, the spider immediately feels it and fixes the broken end of it to the web by which he lets himself down and goes over by that end which he puts out of his tail. And this my eyes have innumerable times made me sure of. Now, sir, it is certain that these webs, when they first proceed from the spider, are so rare a substance that they are lighter than the air, because they will ascend in it (as they will immediately in the calm air), and never descend, except driven by a wind; wherefore 'tis certain. And 'tis as certain that what swims and ascends in the air is lighter than the air, as that what ascends and swims in water is lighter than water. So that if we should suppose at any such time, where the air is perfectly calm, this web is so easily drawn out of the spider's tail that if the end of it be once out, barely the levity of it is sufficient to draw it out to any length; wherefore if it don't happen that the end of this web catches by a tree, or some other body, till there is so long a web drawn out that its levity shall be so great as more than to counterbalance the gravity of the spider, or so that the web and the spider, taken together, shall be lighter than such a quantity of air as takes up equal space—then, according to the universally acknowledged laws of nature, the web and the spider together will ascend, and not descend, in the air; as when a man is at the bottom of the water, if he has hold of a piece of timber so great that the wood's tendency upward is greater than the man's tendency downward, he, together with the wood, will ascend to the surface of the water. And, therefore, when the spider perceives that the web is long enough to bear him up by its ascending force, he lets go his hold of the fixed web and ascends in the air with the floating web. If there be not web more than enough just to counterbalance the gravity of the spider, the spider, together with the web, will hang *in equilibrio*, neither ascending nor descending, otherwise than as the air moves. But if there is so much web that its greater levity shall more than equal the greater density of the spider, they will ascend till the air is so thin that the spider and web together are just of an equal weight with so much air. And in this way, sir, I have multitudes of times seen spiders mount away into the air from a stick in my hands, with a vast train of this silver web before them; for, if the spider be disturbed upon the stick by the shaking of it, he will presently in this manner leave it. And their way of working may very distinctly be seen if they are held up in the sun or against a dark door, or anything that is black.

And this, sir, is the way of spiders' going from one tree to another at a great distance; and this is their way of flying in the air. And, although I say I am certain of it, I don't desire that the truth of it shall be

received upon my word, though I could bring others to testify to it, to whom I have shown it, and who have looked on with admiration to see their manner of working. But every one's eyes, that will take the pains to observe, will make them as sure of it. Only those that would make the experiment must take notice that it is not every sort of a spider that is a flying spider; for those spiders that keep in houses are a quite different sort, as also those that keep in the ground, and those that keep in swamps, in hollow trees, and rotten logs; but those spiders that keep on branches of trees and shrubs are flying spiders. They delight most in walnut-trees, and are that sort of spider that make those curious net-work polygonal webs that are so frequent to be seen in the latter end of the year. There are more of this sort of spiders by far than of any other.

But yet, sir, I am assured that the chief end of this faculty that is given them is not their recreation, but their destruction, because their destruction is unavoidably the effect of it; and we shall find nothing that is the continual effect of nature but what is of the means by which it is brought to pass. But it is impossible but that the greatest part of the spiders upon the land should every year be swept into the ocean. For these spiders never fly except the weather is fair and the atmosphere is dry; but the atmosphere is never clear, neither in this nor in any other continent, only when the wind blows from the midland parts, and, consequently, toward the sea. As here in New England the fair weather is only when the wind is westerly, the land being on that side and the ocean on the easterly. And I have never seen any of these spiders flying but when they have been hastening directly toward the sea. And the time of their flying being so long, even from about the middle of August every sunshiny day until about the end of October (though their chief time, as I observed before, is the latter end of August and beginning of September), and they never flying from the sea, but always toward it, must needs get there at last, for it is unreasonable to suppose that they have sense enough to stop themselves when they come near the sea, for then they would have hundreds of times as many spiders upon the sea-shore as anywhere else. The reason of their flying at that time of year I take to be because then the ground and the trees, the places of their residence in summer, begin to be chilly and uncomfortable. Therefore, when the sun shines pretty warm they leave them and mount up in the air, and expand their webs to the sun, and, flying for nothing but their own ease and comfort, they suffer themselves to go that way that they find they can go with the greatest ease and where the wind pleases; and, it being warmth they fly for, they find it cold and laborious flying against the wind. They, therefore, seem to use their wings, but just so much as to bear

them up, and suffer them to go with the wind. So that, without doubt, almost all aerial insects, and also spiders which live upon trees, are, at the end of the year, swept away into the sea and buried in the ocean, and leave nothing behind them but their eggs for a new stock the next year.

There is in this account of what Parson Edwards's boy had seen at his father's manse in East Windsor a happy mixture of fact and theory—the latter foreshadowing the deductive metaphysical turn of mind which afterward found its highest result in theological treatises. A few years later he began to speculate on the facts of consciousness and the laws of thought, and wrote his thoughts down.

To show the singularly precocious and active mind of Edwards in its earliest manifestations of speculative thought, let me cite a few of his youthful, even childish, speculations on Being and Nothing, and the other metaphysical abstractions that occupied, without filling, his capacious spirit from the age of thirteen to that of thirty. He discourses thus of Being :

That there should be absolutely Nothing at all is utterly impossible. The mind, let it stretch its conceptions ever so far, can never so much as bring itself to conceive of a state of perfect Nothing. It puts the mind into mere convulsion and confusion to think of such a state ; and it contradicts the very nature of the soul to think that such a state should be. It is the greatest of all contradictions to say that *thing* should not be. It is true, we cannot so distinctly show the contradiction in words, because we cannot talk about it without speaking nonsense, and contradicting ourselves at every word ; and because Nothing is that whereby we distinctly show other particular contradictions. But here we are to run up to our first principle, and have no other to explain the nothingness, or not being of Nothing, by. Indeed, we can mean nothing else by Nothing but a state of absolute contradiction ; and, if any man thinks that he can conceive well enough how there should be Nothing, I will engage that what he means by Nothing is as much Something as anything he ever thought of in his life ; and I believe that, if he knew what Nothing was, it would be intuitively evident to him that it could not be. Thus we see that it is necessary that some being should eternally be. And it is a more palpable contradiction still to say that there must be Being somewhere and not other where, for the words *Absolute Nothing* and *Where* contradict each other. And, besides, it gives a great shock to the mind to think of pure Nothing being in any one place as it does to think

of it in all places; and it is self-evident that there can be Nothing in one place as well as another; and, if there can be in one, there can be in all. So that we see that this Necessary, Eternal Being must be Infinite and Omnipresent.

This Infinite and Omnipresent Being cannot be solid. Let us see how contradictory it is to say that an Infinite Being is solid; for solidity surely is nothing but resistance to other solidities. Space is this necessary, eternal, infinite, and omnipresent being. We find that we can, with ease, conceive how all other beings should not be. We can remove them out of our mind and place some other in the room of them; but Space is the very thing that we can never remove, and conceive of its not being. If a man would imagine Space anywhere to be divided, so as there should be nothing between the divided parts, there remains Space between, and so the man contradicts himself. And it is self-evident, I believe, to every man, that Space is necessary, eternal, infinite, and omnipresent. But I had as good speak plain: I have already said as much as that Space is God. And it is, indeed, clear to me that all the Space there is, not proper to body, all the Space there was before the Creation, is God himself; and nobody would in the least pick at it if it were not because of the gross conceptions that we have of Space.

A state of absolute nothing is a state of absolute contradiction. Absolute nothing is the aggregate of all the contradictions in the world—a state wherein there is neither body, nor spirit, nor space, neither empty space nor full space, neither little nor great, narrow nor broad, neither infinite space nor finite space, not even a mathematical point, neither up nor down, neither north nor south (I do not mean as it is with respect to the body of the earth, or some other great body), but no contrary points, positions, or directions, no such thing as here or there, this way or that way, or any way. When we go about to form an idea of perfect Nothing, we must shut out all these things; we must shut out of our minds both space that has something in it and space that has nothing in it. We must not allow ourselves to think of the least part of Space, be it ever so small. Nor must we suffer our thoughts to take sanctuary in a mathematical point. When we go to expel Being out of our thoughts, we must be careful not to leave empty space in the room of it; and, when we go to expel emptiness from our thoughts, we must not think to squeeze it out by anything close, hard, and solid; but we must think of the same that the sleeping rocks do dream of, and not till then shall we get a complete idea of Nothing.

When we go to inquire whether or no there can be absolutely Nothing, we utter nonsense in so inquiring. The stating of the question is

nonsense; because we make a disjunction where there is none. Either Being, or Absolute Nothing, is no disjunction; no more than whether a triangle is a triangle, or not a triangle. There is no other way but only for there to be existence; there is no such thing as Absolute Nothing. There is such a thing as Nothing with respect to this ink and paper; there is such a thing as Nothing with respect to you and me; there is such a thing as Nothing with respect to this globe of earth, and with respect to this Universe. There is another way besides these things having existence, but there is no such thing as Nothing with respect to Entity or Being, absolutely considered. We do not know what we say if we say that we think it possible in itself that there should not be Entity.

And how doth it grate upon the mind to think that Something should be from all eternity, and yet Nothing all the while be conscious of it? To illustrate this: Let us suppose that the World had a being from all eternity, and had many great changes and wonderful revolutions, and all the while Nothing knew it, there was no knowledge in the Universe of any such thing. How is it possible to bring the mind to imagine this? Yea, it is really impossible it should be that anything should exist, and Nothing know it. Then you will say, If it be so, it is because Nothing has any existence but in consciousness. No, certainly, nowhere else but either in created or uncreated consciousness.

There are passages here which foreshadow the course of German thought a hundred years later, while this next passage on "The Place of Mind" might almost have been written by a transcendentalist of Concord:

PLACE OF MIND.—Our common way of conceiving of what is Spiritual is very gross and shadowy and corporeal, with dimensions and figure, etc., though it be supposed to be very clear, so that we can see through it. If we would get a right notion of what is Spiritual, we must think of Thought, or Inclination, or Delight. How large is that thing in the Mind which they call Thought? Is Love square or round? Is the surface of Hatred rough or smooth? Is Joy an inch or a foot in diameter? These are Spiritual things, and why should we then form such a ridiculous idea of Spirits as to think them so long, so thick, or so wide; or to think there is a necessity of their being square, or round, or some other certain figure? Therefore Spirits cannot be *in place* in such a sense that all, within the given limits, shall be where the Spirit is, and all without such a circumscription whether he is or not; but in this sense only, that all created Spirits have clearer and more strongly impressed ideas of things in one place than in another, or can produce effects here, and not

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there; and as this place alters, so Spirits move. In Spirits united to bodies, the Spirit more strongly perceives things where the body is, and can there immediately produce effects; and in this sense the soul can be said to be *in the same place* where the body is. And this law is that we call *the Union between soul and body*. So the soul may be said to be *in the brain*; because ideas, that come by the body immediately, ensue only on alterations that are made there, and the soul immediately produces effects nowhere else.

No doubt that all Finite Spirits, united to bodies or not, are thus *in place*; that is, that they perceive, or passively receive, ideas only of created things, that are in some particular place at a given time. At least, a Finite Spirit cannot thus be in all places at a given time equally. And doubtless the change of the place, where they perceive most strongly and produce effect immediately, is regular and successive; which is the motion of Spirits.

From what is said above, we learn that the seat of the Soul is *not in the Brain* any otherwise than as to its immediate operations, and the immediate operation of things on it. The Soul may also be said to be *in the Heart*, or the Affections, for its immediate operations are there also. Hence, we learn the propriety of the Scriptures calling the soul *the Heart*, when considered with respect to the Will and the Affections.

We seem to think in our heads, because most of the ideas of which our thoughts are constituted, or about which they are conversant, come by the sensories that are in the head, especially the sight and hearing, or those ideas of Reflexion that arise from hence; and partly because we feel the effects of thought and study in our head.

Seeing the Brain exists only mentally, I therefore acknowledge that I speak improperly when I say *the Soul is in the Brain only as to its operations*. For, to speak yet more strictly and abstractedly, 'tis nothing but the connection of the Soul with these and those modes of its own ideas, or those mental acts of the Deity, seeing the Brain exists only in idea. But we have got so far beyond those things for which language was chiefly contrived that, unless we use extreme caution, we cannot speak, except we speak exceedingly unintelligibly, without literally contradicting ourselves. No wonder, therefore, that the high and abstract mysteries of the Deity, the prime and most abstract of all beings, imply so many seeming contradictions.

"Indeed" [says Edwards in the same high strain of thought, but in another connection, amid these speculative meditations], "indeed, the secret lies here: that which truly is the Substance of all Bodies is the *infinitely exact and precise and perfectly stable Idea, in God's mind, together with*

his stable Will, that the same shall gradually be communicated to us, and to other minds according to certain fixed and established Methods and Laws ; or, in somewhat different language, the infinitely exact and precise Divine Idea, together with an answerable, perfectly exact, precise, and stable Will, with respect to correspondent communications to Created Minds, and effects on these minds."

Here, then, we have the purely Platonic doctrine of Ideas, with a modification suited to the needs of the New England theology ; and it is therefore no wonder to find Edwards citing amid these entries in his commonplace book what Dr. Cudworth, the English Platonist, says in his "Intellectual System," published in 1678, some thirty years only before Edwards wrote these pages :

"Plato, in his 'Subterranean Cave,' so famously known, and so elegantly described by him, supposes men tied with their backs toward the Light, placed at a great distance from them, so they could not turn about their heads to it neither, and therefore could see nothing but the shadows of certain substances behind them projected from it, which shadows they concluded to be the only substances and realities. And when they heard the sound made by those bodies that were betwixt the Light and them, or their reverberated echoes, they imputed them to those shadows which they saw. All this is a description of the state of those men who take the Body to be the only Real and Substantial Thing in the world, and to do all that is done in it ; and, therefore, often impute Sense, Reason, and Understanding to nothing but Blood and Brains in us."

Upon this materialistic view of the mind (that thought is a function of matter), so common of late years, Edwards says :

"It has been a question with some whether or no it was not possible with God to the other properties or powers of Matter to add that of Thought ; whether he could not, if he had pleased, have added Thinking and the power of Perception to those other properties of Solidity, Mobility, and Gravitation. The question is not here, Whether the Matter that now is, without the addition of any new primary property, could not be so contrived and modelled, so attenuated, wrought, and moved, as to produce thought ; but whether any Lump of Matter—a solid Atom, for instance—is not capable of receiving, by the Almighty Power of God, in addition to the rest of its powers, a new power of thought.

"That seems to me quite a different thing from the question, Whether Matter can think. For if Thought be in the same place where Matter is,

yet if there be no manner of communication or dependence between that and anything that is material—that is, any of that collection of properties that we call Matter; if none of those properties of Solidity, Extension, etc., wherein Materiality consists, which are Matter, or at least whereby Matter is Matter, have any manner of influence toward the exerting of thought; and if that thought be no way dependent on Solidity or Mobility, and they no way help the matter, but Thought could be as well without those properties—then Thought is not properly *in* Matter, though it be in the same place. All the properties that are properly said to be in Matter depend on the other properties of Matter, so that they cannot be without them. Thus Figure is in Matter: it depends on Solidity and Extension; and so do Motion; so doth Gravity; and Extension itself depends upon Solidity, for nothing can be solid except it be extended. These ideas have a dependence on one another; but there is no manner of connection between the ideas of Perception and Solidity, or Motion, or Gravity. Nor can there be any dependence, for the ideas in their own Nature are independent and alien one to another. And except the property of Thought be included in the properties of Matter, I think it cannot properly be said that Matter has Thought.”

Enough, you will cry, of these metaphysical reasonings of the New England Puritan—and I will give you no more of them. But take notice that they display an activity and subtlety of mind such as no American philosopher had before shown, and that they were very much in the line of intellectual effort in his day—that is, in the first half of the eighteenth century.

I wish to point out, in closing, what the practical philosophy or politico-ethical work of Puritanism was in America, and how closely Edwards coincided in time with the vanishing period of Puritanic sway. He died in 1758, just as the twenty years' contest between New and Old England was about to commence; and at that time Puritanism, having done its special work, was passing away. It had been a stern and rough nurse about the cradle of our infant nation; but the spirited child, not forsaken of Heaven—*non sine dis animosus infans*—had thriven by contact with the harsh conditions of life around him, and most of all by the useful austerity of the Puritan philosophy. In that scheme of the world the cardinal points were God and Duty; the State was a divine institution, like the Church, and its functions were to be sacredly upheld, and undertaken in the fear of God. The advantages of such a discipline to a raw people, cast upon these

shores amid the freedom-breathing but barbarizing influences of a new colony, can scarcely be over-estimated. Puritanism to such men was a girdle, not a fetter; it held them together and made them march forward in line, instead of straggling along without aim or purpose. But in time the girdle became a chain; the people began to fret under it and threw it off; and this was the very period at which Edwards and Franklin appeared. The one contended stoutly for the old faith, in all its strictness and with all its alarming penalties for sin; the other, with genial and prudent good nature, sought to introduce a milder sway, more friendly to the general development of mankind. Both were powerful forces, and had other forces more powerful behind them; but the time had come for Puritanism to withdraw from the scene, and the controversial writings of Edwards furnished the salvo of theological artillery under cover of which the army of the Puritans fell back in good order, leaving the field to Democracy and the philanthropists.

MAN'S FREEDOM IN HIS MORAL NATURE.

BY ROWLAND G. HAZARD.

[In the July number we quoted largely from the first part of Dr. Hazard's new book on "Man a Creative First Cause." The following extracts are from the second part and the notes of the same work, under the general title of "Man in the Sphere of his own Moral Nature a Supreme Creative First Cause."—ED.]

[*A Cognitive Sense includes a Moral Sense.*]

The phenomena of the external are brought within range of our immediate mental perceptions by means of the external organs of sense. For the internal cognitive spontaneity, the main, if not the only, immediate instrumentalities seem to be the attributes (senses?) of memory and association, singly and in combination; but its genesis is often, perhaps always, by suggestion from the bodily organs, through the senses or the appetites, which much resemble and are closely allied to the senses. The sound of a cannon may call up our knowledge of the battle of Waterloo. The continual flow of ideas through the mind, singly or in trains or